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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 6789
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4022
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1356
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1261
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 3604
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 3991
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 8512
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LA PAZ 000599

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BL](#)

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE KEEPING TIGHT REINS ON CONSTITUENT
ASSEMBLY

Classified By: Amb. David N. Greenlee for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a March 6 meeting with international donors, Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linera complimented the Bolivian Congress for approving the enabling legislation for the Constituent Assembly (CA), stating that two things are clear: the Morales government has a solid plan for action, and it has the capacity, flexibility, and patience to negotiate in the best interests of the Bolivian people. Late March 6, President Morales promulgated the CA enabling legislation and the law providing for a referendum on departmental autonomy, and issued a decree creating several new government structures (all to be placed under Garcia Linera's authority) which will attempt to encourage debate, build consensus, diffuse information and consolidate citizens' demands regarding the CA. While the new government institutions purport to be inclusive, they also enable the executive (namely Garcia Linera) to keep tight reins on the unfolding CA process. End summary.

¶2. (C) In a March 6 meeting with international donors, Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linera complimented the Bolivian Congress for approving the enabling legislation for the Constituent Assembly (CA), stating that two things are clear: the Morales government has a solid plan for action, and it has the capacity, flexibility, and patience to negotiate in the best interests of the Bolivian people. The Vice-President spoke with great pride about Congress' ability to put aside differences and come to a quick consensus. He stated that he's optimistic about the CA because the differences among Bolivians on key issues are less than they appear in public.

¶3. (C) Late March 6, President Morales promulgated the CA enabling legislation and the law providing for a referendum on departmental autonomy, and issued a decree creating several new government structures (all to be placed under Garcia Linera's authority) which will attempt to encourage debate, build consensus, diffuse information and consolidate citizens' demands regarding the CA. The new structures are:

--National Office for the CA and Autonomy. This office will be located in Santa Cruz with sub-offices in each department to promote debate, meetings, and studies regarding the CA.

It will also disseminate information regarding the CA to the public and coordinate with social sectors. On March 7, President Morales will designate a person from Santa Cruz to head this office.

--Pre-CA department councils. Also housed in each of the nine departments, these bodies will serve a more technical role in the CA process. They will hear citizens' demands and bring issues to the government's attention.

--National Pre-CA and Pre-autonomy Council. Will bring the ten most important actors from the business, political and social sectors to the same table to hash out controversial issues and reach consensus. While this organization will not have a formal link to the CA, many of the groups comprising the Council will presumably also have formal representation in the CA. Garcia Linera explained that this organization will serve the same role for the CA as did his meetings with political party leaders leading to passage of the CA bill, in which they worked through difficult issues in advance, thus facilitating the work of Congress.

14. (C) Comment: While the new government institutions purport to be inclusive, they also enable the executive to keep tight reins on the unfolding CA process, as all will come under Garcia Linera's direct authority. During the March 6 meeting, Garcia Linera spoke with authority about the CA; he may have found his niche in the Morales government as its intellectual author and proponent. The MAS has ceded some ground in setting up the CA, but given Garcia Linera's conviction regarding its importance and the high expectations surrounding it, all signs indicate that the executive branch

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will now shift its attention to making sure that the CA progresses according to the GOB's still unclear plan. End comment.
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